



June 2001

FLAGGER SAFETY

Flagger safety is a top priority for WSDOT and much has happened in the past two years or so to improve flagger safety. This bulletin is intended to provide safety awareness and guidance on compliance to current standards. Those involved in flagging operations as a flagger, supervisor, crew member or manager need to be familiar with the requirements for work zone flagging operations. Flaggers tend to be more exposed to traffic and equipment hazards and the following guidance is intended to reduce exposure to those hazards.

Standards

The standards that apply to flagging operations are found in;

- Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) Millennium Edition, Part 6

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/biz/trafficoperations/pdf/6andi.pdf>

- Work Zone Traffic Control Guidelines, M54-44

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/fasc/EngineeringPublications/Manuals/Workzone.pdf>

- Washington Administrative Code WAC 296-155-305

<http://www.leg.wa.gov/wac/index.cfm?fuseaction=Section&Section=296-155-305>

Knowledge and compliance to these standards is a necessary and important part of conducting safe flagging operations.

Guidance

The following guidance applies the above standards to WSDOT flagging operations and specifically addresses some of the hazards and practices.

- Use of flaggers should be limited as much as possible and only use flaggers when all other forms of traffic control are not appropriate or effective.
- Flagging from the center of an intersection (with or without a paddle) is not allowed. (law enforcement officers can direct traffic from the center of an intersection)
- Flagging on centerline of a roadway (surveying, inspection, pavement marking, etc.) without appropriate lane closure or lane shifting traffic control is not allowed.
- Unprotected flagging stations in close proximity to backing equipment is not allowed.
- Unprotected flagging stations in active traffic locations or work zones with activities such as hauling & loading, commercial access, multiple work activities & crews, multiple traffic approaches or traffic approaching from behind the flagger are not allowed.
- Flagging stations with no escape route are not allowed unless positive protection is in place at the flagger station.
- Flagging at intersections where flagger direction and signal displays conflict are not allowed except for short duration work or emergencies. Signals should be turned off for longer duration flagging operations.
- Flagger stations must be illuminated at night.

- Flagger job site orientation is required prior to flagging. (see attached below “flagger hazard awareness briefing” and summary of rules)

The above listed issues are examples and not a complete list. All flagging operations must be evaluated for safety and standards compliance as part of a work planning process.

The following documents summarize WSDOT’s implementation of the flagging WAC’s.



newrulesmemo.doc summaryofrules.doc "ER trng card.doc"

Resources

Resources for alternatives to flagging traffic control are available through the Region Traffic Offices.

Approved traffic control plans (TCP) are required for flagging, as with all work zones, and the flagging station must be incorporated into and be an integral part of the TCP. If the approved TCP’s in the M54-44 or other approved plans do not adequately address a specific work zone, the Region Traffic Office should be contacted to assist with developing an acceptable TCP. The Region and HQ Safety Offices are also a resource for flagging guidance.

Additional guidance for;

- Short duration flagging
- Mobile & moving flagging
- Emergency flagging

is being developed and will be made available in the future.

Also, new flagging devices and methods are being evaluated. Such as;

- Portable signal systems
- Automated flagging devices
- Intrusion alarms and other warning devices
- Protective devices

Summary

Generally WSDOT does a good job of flagging in a safe and effective manner, but there are hazards that need to be addressed and new rules to comply with. With so much at stake.....***your life, a co-worker and others***, please take the time to consider this bulletin.



Washington State
Department of Transportation
Work Zone Safety Task Force